

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A communications system, comprising:

~~an a plurality of~~ information processing apparatus; and

an information management apparatus operable to manage playing positions of contents;

each of said information processing apparatus including:

playing means for playing content provided via a network;

first request means for requesting that said information management apparatus store a time stamp in association with predetermined identification information and access right information, ~~while said content is played by said playing means,~~ in response to an instruction that said time stamp representing a playing position of said content at that moment be stored; and

second request means for transmitting said identification information to said information management apparatus and for requesting the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, wherein

said identification information includes information allotted to each user and information allotted to each user group,

said access right information includes information indicating whether a confirmation, by user identification, of an access right to said playing position of the content represented by said time stamp is necessary, and

said playing means is operable to play said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp in accordance with the request by said second request means; and

said information management apparatus including:

management means for managing the provision of said content to said respective information processing apparatus via said network; and

storing means for storing said time stamp in association with said identification information and said access right information,

wherein said management means is operable to manage the provision of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp based on said associated access right information when said information processing apparatus transmits said identification information and requests the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, wherein said management means is operable to determine, based on said associated access right information, whether a confirmation of an access right by user identification is necessary to provide said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, responsive to a request from the information processing apparatus for the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, and

wherein said playing position represented by said time stamp corresponds to a stopped position whereat a respective user requested that said content be stopped by use of a first one of said information processing apparatus and wherein said content is playable from said stopped position based on said associated access right information by use of a second one of said information processing apparatus which is different from the first one thereof.

2. (currently amended) A communication method in a communication system including a plurality of information processing apparatus and an information management apparatus

operable to manage playing positions of contents, the communication method comprising:

playing content provided via a network;

requesting that said information management apparatus store a time stamp in association with predetermined identification information and access right information during said playing step in response to an instruction to store said time stamp representing a playing position of said content at that moment;

transmitting said identification information to said information management apparatus and requesting the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, said identification information including information allotted to each user and information allotted to each user group, said access right information including information indicating whether a confirmation, by user identification, of an access right to said playing position of the content represented by said time stamp is necessary, and said playing step playing said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp in accordance with said step of requesting the playing;

storing said time stamp in association with said identification information and said access right information; and

managing the provision of said content to a respective said information processing apparatus via said network from said playing position represented by said time stamp based on said associated access right information when said transmitting step transmits said identification information and said step of requesting the playing requests the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp,

wherein the managing includes determining, based on said associated access right information, whether a confirmation of an access right by user identification is necessary to provide said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, responsive to a request for the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, and

wherein said playing position represented by said time stamp corresponds to a stopped position whereat a respective user requested that said content be stopped by use of a first one of said information processing apparatus and wherein said content is playable from said stopped position based on said associated access right information by use of a second one of said information processing apparatus which is different from the first one thereof.

3. (currently amended) An information processing apparatus, comprising:

playing means for playing content provided via a network;

first request means for requesting that an information management apparatus which manages playing positions of contents store a time stamp in association with predetermined identification information and access right information, while said content is played by said playing means, in response to an instruction to store said time stamp representing a playing position of said content at that moment; and

second request means for transmitting said identification information to the information management apparatus and for requesting the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, wherein

said identification information includes information allotted to each user and information allotted to each user group,

said access right information includes information indicating whether a confirmation, by user identification, of an access right to said playing position of the content represented by said time stamp is necessary, and

said playing means is operable to play said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp in accordance with the request by said second request means and said access right information associated with the time stamp,

wherein said playing means is operable to determine, based on, said associated access right information, whether a confirmation of an access right by user identification is necessary to play said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, responsive to a request by the second request means for the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, and

wherein said information processing apparatus is connectable via said network to another information processing apparatus, said playing position represented by said time stamp corresponds to a stopped position whereat a respective user requested that said content be stopped by use of said information processing apparatus, and said content is playable from said stopped position based on said associated access right information by use of the another information processing apparatus which is different from said information processing apparatus.

4. (previously presented) The information processing apparatus as claimed in Claim 3, wherein: ,

said first request means is operable to request that the information management apparatus stop the provision of said

content and store said time stamp upon issuance of an instruction to stop the playing of said content.

5. (cancelled)

6. (previously presented) The information processing apparatus as claimed in Claim 3, further comprising:

third request means for requesting that a viewing status information management apparatus that manages viewing status information store viewing status information representing a viewing status of said content,

wherein said second request means is operable to request the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp in accordance with said viewing status of said content represented by said viewing status information.

7. (currently amended) An information processing method for use by an information processing apparatus, said method comprising:

playing content provided via a network;

requesting that an information management apparatus which manages playing positions of contents store a time stamp in association with predetermined identification information and access right information during said playing step in response to an instruction to store said time stamp representing a playing position of said content at that moment, said access right information including information indicating whether a confirmation, by user identification, of an access right to said playing position of the content represented by said time stamp is necessary; and

transmitting said identification information to the information management apparatus and requesting the playing of

said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, said identification information including information allotted to each user and information allotted to each user group, and the playing step plays said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp in accordance with said step of requesting the playing and said access right information associated with the time stamp,

wherein the playing step determines, based on said associated access right information, whether a confirmation of an access right by user identification is necessary to play said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, responsive to a request for the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, and

wherein said information processing apparatus is connectable by way of said network to another information processing apparatus, said playing position represented by said time stamp corresponds to a stopped position whereat a respective user requested that said content be stopped by use of said information processing apparatus, and said content is playable from said stopped position based on said associated access right information by use of the another information processing apparatus which is different from said information processing apparatus.

8. (currently amended) A recording medium having recorded therein a computer readable program for carrying out an information processing method for use by an information processing apparatus, said information processing method comprising:

playing content provided via a network;

requesting that an information management apparatus which manages playing positions of contents store a time stamp in association with predetermined identification information and

access right information during said playing step in response to an instruction to store said time stamp representing a playing position of said content at that moment, wherein said access right information includes information indicating whether a confirmation, by a user identification, of an access right to said playing position of the content represented by said time stamp is necessary; and

transmitting said identification information to the information management apparatus and requesting the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, said identification information including information allotted to each user and information allotted to each user group, and the playing step plays said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp in accordance with said step of requesting the playing and said access right information associated with the time stamp, wherein the playing step determines, based on said associated access right information, whether a confirmation of an access right by user identification is necessary to play said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, responsive to a request for the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, and

wherein said information processing apparatus is connectable by way of said network to another information processing apparatus, said playing position represented by said time stamp corresponds to a stopped position whereat a respective user requested that said content be stopped by use of said information processing apparatus, and said content is playable from said stopped position based on said associated access right information by use of the another information processing apparatus which is different from said information processing apparatus.

9. (currently amended) A system for processing information, comprising:

a processor operable to execute instructions; and instructions for carrying out an information processing method for use by an information processing apparatus, the information processing method including:

playing content provided via a network;

requesting that an information management apparatus which manages playing positions of contents store a time stamp in association with predetermined identification information and access right information during said playing step in response to an instruction to store said time stamp representing a playing position of said content at that moment, said access right information including information indicating whether a confirmation, by user identification, of an access right to said playing position of the content represented by said time stamp is necessary; and

transmitting said identification information to the information management apparatus and requesting the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, said identification information including information allotted to each user and information allotted to each user group, and the playing step plays said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp in accordance with said step of requesting the playing and said access right information associated with the time stamp,

wherein the playing step determines, based on said associated access right information, whether a confirmation of an access right by user identification is necessary to play said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, responsive to a request for the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, and

wherein said information processing apparatus is connectable by way of said network to another information processing apparatus, said playing position represented by said time stamp corresponds to a stopped position whereat a respective user requested that said content be stopped by use of said information processing apparatus, and said content is playable from said stopped position based on said associated access right information by use of the another information processing apparatus which is different from said information processing apparatus.

10. (currently amended) An information management apparatus, comprising:

management means for managing the provision of predetermined content to an information processing apparatus via a network; and

storing means for storing a time stamp in association with predetermined identification information and access right information in accordance with a request from the information processing apparatus, said time stamp representing a playing position of said content provided via said network and said access right information including information indicating whether a confirmation, by a user identification, of an access right to said playing position of the content represented by said time stamp is necessary, wherein

said management means is operable to manage the provision of said content from the playing position represented by said time stamp based on said associated access right information ~~when the information processing apparatus transmits said identification information and requests that said content be played from the playing position represented by said time stamp,~~

wherein said management means is operable to determine, based on said associated access right information, whether a confirmation of an access right by user identification is necessary to provide said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, responsive to a request ~~from the information processing apparatus~~ for the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, and

wherein said information processing apparatus is connectable by way of said network to another information processing apparatus, said playing position represented by said time stamp corresponds to a stopped position whereat a respective user requested that said content be stopped by use of said information processing apparatus, and said content is playable from said stopped position based on said associated access right information by use of the another information processing apparatus which is different from said information processing apparatus.

11. (currently amended) The information management apparatus as claimed in Claim 10, further comprising:

viewing status information storing means for storing viewing status information representing a viewing status of said content in accordance with a request ~~from the information processing apparatus,~~

~~wherein said management means is operable to manage the provision of said content from the playing position represented by said time stamp when the viewing status of said content represented by the viewing status information indicates that said content has not been played to the end.~~

12. (currently amended) An information management method, comprising:

providing predetermined content to an information processing apparatus via a network; and

storing a time stamp in association with predetermined identification information and access right information in accordance with a request from the information processing apparatus, said time stamp representing a playing position of said content provided by said providing step and said access right information including information indicating whether a confirmation, by a user identification, of an access right to said playing position of the content represented by said time stamp is necessary, wherein

said providing step provides said content from the playing position represented by said time stamp based on said associated access right information when the information processing apparatus transmits said identification information and requests that said content be played from the playing position represented by said time stamp,

wherein the providing step determines, based on said associated access right information, whether a confirmation of an access right by user identification is necessary to play said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, responsive to a request for the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, and

wherein said information processing apparatus is connectable by way of said network to another information processing apparatus, said playing position represented by said time stamp corresponds to a stopped position whereat a respective user requested that said content be stopped by use of said information processing apparatus, and said content is playable from said stopped position based on said associated access right information by use of the another information processing apparatus which is different from said information processing apparatus.

13. (currently amended) A recording medium having recorded therein a computer readable program for carrying out an information management method, the information management method comprising:

providing predetermined content to an information processing apparatus via a network; and

storing a time stamp in association with predetermined identification information and access right information in accordance with a request from the information processing apparatus, said time stamp representing a playing position of said content provided by said providing step and said access right information including information indicating whether a confirmation, by user identification, of an access right to said playing position of the content represented by said time stamp is necessary, wherein

said providing step provides said content from the playing position represented by said time stamp based on said associated access right information ~~when the information processing apparatus transmits said identification information and requests that said content be played from the playing position represented by said time stamp,~~

wherein the providing step determines, based on said associated access right information, whether a confirmation of an access right by user identification is necessary to play said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, responsive to a request from the information processing apparatus for the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, and

wherein said information processing apparatus is connectable by way of said network to another information processing apparatus, said playing position represented by said time stamp corresponds to a stopped position whereat a

respective user requested that said content be stopped by use of said information processing apparatus, and said content is playable from said stopped position based on said associated access right information by use of the another information processing apparatus which is different from said information processing apparatus.

14. (currently amended) A system for managing information, comprising:

a processor operable to execute instructions; and instructions for carrying out an information management method, the information management method including:  
providing predetermined content to an information processing apparatus via a network; and

storing a time stamp in association with predetermined identification information and access right information in accordance with a request from the information processing apparatus, said time stamp representing a playing position of said content provided by said providing step and said access right information including information indicating whether a confirmation, by user identification, of an access right to said playing position of the content represented by said time stamp is necessary, wherein

said providing step provides said content from the playing position represented by said time stamp based on said associated access right information ~~when the information processing apparatus transmits said identification information and requests that said content be played from the playing position represented by said time stamp,~~

wherein the providing step determines, based on said associated access right information, whether a confirmation of an access right by user identification is necessary to play said content from said playing position represented by said time

stamp, responsive to a request from the information processing apparatus for the playing of said content from said playing position represented by said time stamp, and

wherein said information processing apparatus is connectable by way of said network to another information processing apparatus, said playing position represented by said time stamp corresponds to a stopped position whereat a respective user requested that said content be stopped by use of said information processing apparatus, and said content is playable from said stopped position based on said associated access right information by use of the another information processing apparatus which is different from said information processing apparatus.